

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (currently amended) A sample suction ~~apparatus~~ apparatus,  
comprising:

a first member, a second ~~member~~ member, and a third member  
capable of linearly reciprocating along the same direction and  
spaced from each other, the second member being located between the  
first member and the third member;

~~— a drive source provided on the third member to enlarge and  
reduce a distance between the first member and the third member;~~

an elastically compressible spacer inserted between the second  
member and the third member; ~~and~~

a suction needle provided on the third member, the suction  
needle pointing to the first ~~member~~ member; and

a single drive source provided on the third member for  
performing wherein the drive source reduces the distance between the  
first member and the third member to perform: a first action of  
shifting the first member toward the second ~~third~~ member such that  
~~to contact~~ the first member makes contact with a portion of a  
specimen vessel while maintaining a predetermined distance between  
the second member and the third member by elasticity of the spacer;  
a second action of shifting the second member together with the

capable/adapted to  
or ok?

Should also  
claim vessel?

third member toward the first member until ~~to contact~~ the second member makes contact with another portion of the specimen vessel such ~~so~~ that the specimen vessel is sandwiched between the first and second members; and a third action of shifting the third member, against the elasticity of the spacer, toward the first member ~~to compress the spacer~~ to bring the third member closer ~~close~~ to the second member while maintaining the specimen vessel sandwiched between the first member and the second member such ~~so~~ that the suction needle is inserted in the specimen vessel.

2. (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

*Q12* a rail,  
wherein the first, ~~second~~ second, and third members include  
~~comprise~~ three sliders slidably mounted on a rail the rail.

3. (currently amended) A sample suction ~~apparatus~~ apparatus, comprising: ~~according to claim 1~~

a first member, a second member, and a third member capable of  
linearly reciprocating along the same direction and spaced from  
each other, the second member being located between the first  
member and the third member;

a drive source provided on the third member to increase and  
reduce a distance between the first member and the third member;

an elastically compressible spacer inserted between the second member and the third member; and

a suction needle provided on the third member, the suction needle pointing to the first member, wherein the drive source reduces the distance between the first member and the third member to perform: a first action of shifting the first member toward the third member to contact the first member with a portion of a specimen vessel; a second action of shifting the second member together with the third member toward the first member to contact the second member with another portion of the specimen vessel so that the specimen vessel is sandwiched between the first and second members; and a third action of shifting the third member toward the first member to compress the spacer to bring the third member closer to the second member so that the suction needle is inserted in the specimen vessel,

Q12

wherein the drive source includes ~~comprises~~ an air cylinder having a piston rod, the air cylinder being provided on the third member and a distal end of the piston rod being connected with the first member.

4. (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus according to claim ~~2~~ 2, further comprising:

a stopper for restricting movement of the first member toward the third member;

a substrate on which the rail and the a stopper for restricting the movement of the first member toward the third member are provided; and

a biasing member for biasing the third member toward a direction opposite to the first member.

5. (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus according to claim ~~3~~ 3, further comprising:

a stopper for restricting the movement of the first member toward the third member;

a substrate on which the rail and the a stopper for restricting the movement of the first member toward the third member are provided; and

a biasing member for biasing the third member toward a direction opposite to the first member.

6. (original) A sample suction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the spacer is a compressible spring.

7. (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ further 1, further comprising:

\_\_\_\_\_ a sensor for detecting that the specimen vessel is sandwiched between the first member and the second member.

8. (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus, comprising: ~~according to claim 1,~~

\_\_\_\_\_ a first member, a second member, and a third member capable of linearly reciprocating along the same direction and spaced from each other, the second member being located between the first member and the third member;

\_\_\_\_\_ a drive source provided on the third member to enlarge and reduce a distance between the first member and the third member;

\_\_\_\_\_ an elastically compressible spacer inserted between the second member and the third member;

\_\_\_\_\_ a suction needle provided on the third member, the suction needle pointing to the first member, wherein the drive source reduces the distance between the first member and the third member to perform: a first action of shifting the first member toward the third member to contact the first member with a portion of a specimen vessel; a second action of shifting the second member

together with the third member toward the first member to contact  
the second member with another portion of the specimen vessel so  
that the specimen vessel is sandwiched between the first and second  
members; and a third action of shifting the third member toward the  
first member to compress the spacer to bring the third member  
closer to the second member so that the suction needle is inserted  
in the specimen vessel; and

wherein the second member includes a washing bath provided in  
the second member for washing the suction needle.

method  
claim  
no structure added → 9. ~~cancel~~ (currently amended) A sample suction apparatus according  
to claim 1, wherein the sample suction apparatus draws blood is  
contained as a specimen in the specimen vessel as a specimen.

no structure for analyzing blood or performing hematology system  
10. (currently amended) A ~~hematology analyzer~~, comprising:  
a sample suction apparatus according to claim 1; and, which is  
utilized in a hematology analyzer  
a conveyor for continuously transferring racks carrying a  
plurality of specimen vessels to the sample suction apparatus.

11. (currently amended) A hematology analyzer, comprising:  
a first part for storing racks, each rack carrying a plurality  
of specimen vessels;  
a second part for transferring the rack to a predetermined  
position;

~~utilizing~~ a sample suction apparatus according to claim 1 for successively drawing specimen from each of the plurality of specimen vessels carried by the rack placed in the predetermined position; and

a third part for collecting the rack after specimen has been drawn from each of the plurality of specimen vessels carried by the rack.

12. (new) A sample suction apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:

a resilient member that urges the piston rod to extend in a direction the increases a distance between the first member and the third member, the resilient member having a spring coefficient smaller than a spring coefficient of the spacer.

13. (new) A sample suction apparatus for aspirating a specimen from a specimen vessel by using a suction needle, comprising:

a drive source;

a first movable member supporting a first end of the specimen vessel and adapted to be movable by the drive source;

a second movable member supporting a second end of the specimen vessel and adapted to be movable by the drive source; and

a third movable member holding the suction needle and adapted to be movable by the drive source,

wherein the second movable member is arranged between the first movable member and the third movable member.

14. (new) A sample suction apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:

an elastic member arranged between the second movable member and the third movable member.

---